About the North Pennines

A rich tapestry of rare and important habitats and species makes the North Pennines a vital area for nature conservation and biodiversity. This is mainly an upland landscape divided by broad dales, through which the South Tyne, Allens, Derwent and Devil's Water rivers flow.

A mosaic of blanket bog, heath and grass moorland slopes down to an extensive field system of pasture and allotment ground. Semi-natural woodlands are largely restricted to riverbanks, watercourses and minor valleys and gills. In the dales, conifer plantations, scattered farm woodland and shelter belts occur, with hedgerow trees abundant in the lower dales.

Land use is mainly livestock farming and grouse shooting. Livestock graze the extensive areas of grass moorland, allotment, and pasture on the hillsides. Across the broad dales, sheep and cattle are reared on in-bye pastures and meadows.

A wealth of species

Nationally rare, flower-rich upland hay meadows lie close to wet, rushy pasture, providing feeding and breeding areas for curlew, lapwing, redshank and snipe, grey partridge, black grouse, and ring ouzel.

The headwaters of rivers and streams are particularly important wildlife habitats and support species not found in other parts of river systems. The streams and rivers are home to otter, water vole, brown trout and Atlantic salmon.

The North Pennine Moors are designated for the key moorland bird species including hen harrier, peregrine, merlin, and golden plover. The whole area is a National Landscape.

Contact information

Let us know what you think.

We have suggested some ideas in this leaflet, but what do you think are the most important actions that could be undertaken to help nature thrive in this area? Whether you manage land, run a business or are a local resident, we want to hear your views.

If you are a farmer or landowner there will be a more detailed consultation for you.

Contact us

Email: lnrs@northumberland.gov.uk

WhatsApp: 07929 746542

You can also leave voice notes and/or videos via our WhatsApp.

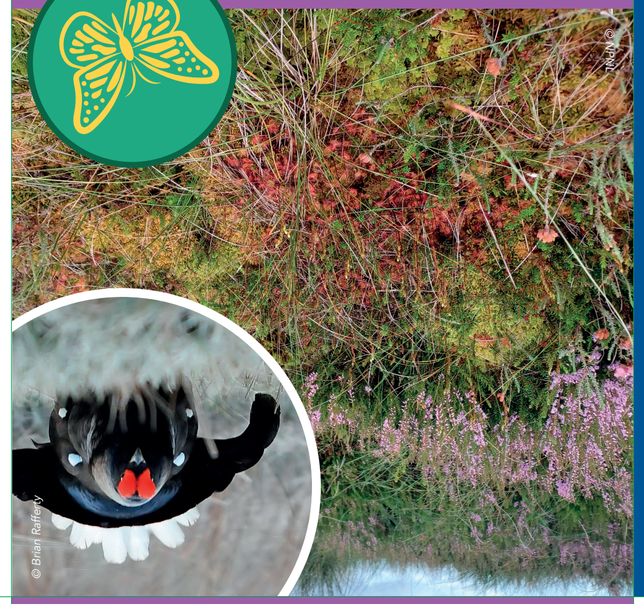
Leave your comments below:

Please note: Participation is voluntary, and you can join at any stage. There will be a consultation on the final document. While all public bodies will have a legal obligation to have regard to the LNRS, it is non-binding for private landowners. Private land managers will not be required to make changes or designate new nature reserves because of the LNRS.

Northumberland County Council

North Pennines

Nature Recovery Conversations



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What is the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)?

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) aim to create and implement locally tailored solutions to improve our natural environment, address species loss, and build resilience in landscapes across England.

The North East Combined Authority oversees the LNRS in Northumberland, Newcastle, and North Tyneside, with Northumberland County Council leading the project. This strategy will serve as an essential plan for protecting our wildlife.

Preparing and implementing the strategy will require a collective effort involving farmers, landowners, land managers and local organisations who already have a vast knowledge of our landscape. Anyone involved in the local environment is encouraged to contribute to the strategy.

Your involvement now can shape what we do for nature, future funding, local planning policy and how we do things differently.

Why does your input matter?

Our natural environment is a resource shared by everybody. It is important that we all have our say about the actions that should be taken to support nature recovery. No one knows the land like someone who has been working on it for generations.

Which is why we want our LNRS to reflect the views and priorities, experience, knowledge, and the understanding of our farmers, land managers, landowners, and local organisations in the North of Tyne area who know the land inside out.

By contributing to our LNRS, you can help shape a practical and achievable strategy that:

- Demonstrates a better alignment of food production and nature recovery
- Represents your views on what is feasible and practical on your land
- Influences future resources and funding allocations

Together we can deliver a wide range of benefits that play a vital role in enhancing our landscape.

How will it be delivered?

The LNRS will work alongside the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme. Together, LNRS and ELM will determine how the Government will fund land-based environmental and climate projects. Funding will also be available through Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and other nature-focused financial programmes.

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How can the LNRS help your business?

- Identify win-win scenarios that align environmental management with profitable farm businesses
- Harness nature-based solutions to enhance farm adaptability and land resilience
- Balance what is realistic and achievable, alongside effective food production
- Influence future funding opportunities, from a range of public and private sources
- If you work for a public body, the LNRS can help you to implement your legal duties to conserve and enhance the environment

What are the opportunities in this area?

Is there space for more hedges, better hedge management and trees in hedges on every farm? Space for a pond? Trees along riverbanks?

Blanket bog/deep peat

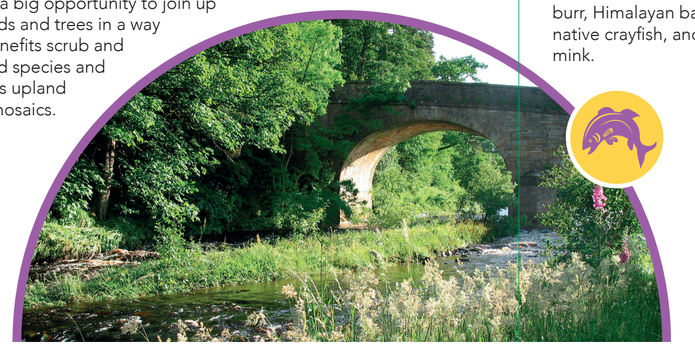
The major threat to blanket bog from drainage and forestry is now largely historic. There has been considerable progress to restore hydrology and revegetate bare peat on our peatlands, but there remains much to be done.

Upland heath

This requires changes to management (no rotational burning, minimal burning and cutting, and appropriate stock grazing regimes) to increase structural diversity and encourage more dynamic and intricate mosaics with wetlands and scrub, important for many species.

Woodland, trees and wood pasture

More wood pasture, scrub and scattered trees in places where it will have minimal impact on wading birds (Curlew, Lapwing, Redshank, Snipe) is a big opportunity to join up woodlands and trees in a way which benefits scrub and woodland species and diversifies upland habitat mosaics.



Species-rich grassland

There are opportunities to restore and enhance species-rich upland hay meadows and other grassland habitats, such as road verges. Regenerative pasture management has great potential to improve above and below ground biodiversity through sward diversification and rotational grazing management.

The in-bye suite of wading birds

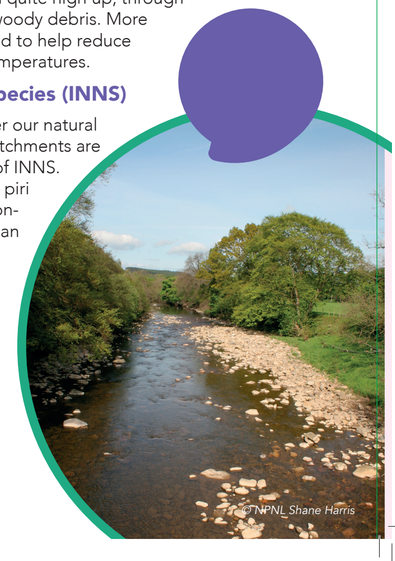
An increased focus on improving conditions for the in-bye suite of wading birds is important in a national context. This includes keeping key areas open, rewetting land, and rush management in pasture.

Rivers and streams

There are opportunities to reconnect watercourses with their floodplains, even quite high up, through techniques such as using woody debris. More trees and scrub are required to help reduce dangerously high-water temperatures.

Invasive non-native species (INNS)

INNS continue to endanger our natural ecosystems. Headwater catchments are a priority to be kept clear of INNS. Current threats include Piri piri burr, Himalayan balsam, non-native crayfish, and American mink.



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Most of the area is within the North Pennines National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). Around half is designated for its importance for nature conservation, but some of it is not in good ecological condition.

Species-rich grassland

Traditional farming methods have kept many species-rich upland hay meadows, which are one of the rarest habitats in the country. This area holds some of the best hay meadows in the UK. These meadows can also be good nesting and feeding sites for grey partridge, black grouse, and curlew.

There are opportunities to restore and enhance species-rich upland hay meadows, and other grassland habitats such as road verges. Regenerative pasture management has great potential to improve above and below ground biodiversity through sward diversification and rotational grazing management.

Rivers and streams

Some watercourses suffer from nutrient enrichment from agricultural run-off. Increasing summer temperatures is leading to dangerously high water temperatures. The headwaters of the North Pennines are a key location in England for water vole, and North Pennine rivers and streams are important spawning grounds for trout and Atlantic salmon, and breeding sites for birds such as dipper, common sandpiper, and grey wagtail.

Woodland and trees

Ancient and semi-natural woodlands are fragmented and vulnerable and would benefit from appropriate management and expansion.

Creating more wood pasture, scattered scrub and trees in gills is an opportunity to join up woodlands and trees. New planting needs careful consideration to avoid important areas for wading birds and priority habitats such as blanket bog and species-rich grassland.

Breeding wading birds (curlew, lapwing, redshank, snipe)

Below the moorland line lies an extensive field system of pasture or allotment ground with varying degrees of cover by soft rush. Allotments with the right amount of cover are key breeding habitats for a suite of wading birds (curlew, lapwing, redshank and snipe), and feeding habitat for black grouse and ring ouzel.

Improving conditions for the in-bye suite of wading birds is important in a national context. This includes keeping key areas open, rewetting land, and rush management in pasture.

Haltwhistle

Hexham

Corbridge

Alston

Blanket Bog

This moorland habitat occurs on deep peat (Blanket bog) and is a valuable habitat for many plants and animals as well as providing vital services such as carbon storage, flood risk reduction and clean drinking water. A programme of restoration work is underway, but there is more to do.

Heathland

This moorland habitat occurs on shallow peat soils (less than 40cm deep). Appropriate grazing helps to create diversity, which is important for many plants and animals. Grass moorland is common on shallow peat soils, often derived from heathland through overgrazing. This, and the conifer blocks planted on peatland, could be restored to heathland habitat.

Sensitive and threatened species

Some species would benefit from targeted conservation measures. These include adder, which are under-recorded and at risk, and hazel dormice - present only at Allen Banks. Release and feeding of non-native gamebirds near or on sensitive sites threatens reptile, and some invertebrate, populations.

Invasive non-native species (INNS)

INNS continue to endanger our natural ecosystems. Headwater catchments are a priority to be kept clear of INNS. Current threats include Piri piri burr, Himalayan balsam, non-native crayfish and American mink.

LEGEND

- Nature conservation sites
- Peaty soils
- Existing trees and woods
- Commercial forestry

1:120,000

Northumberland County Council